Cary Library Children's Use of the Library Policy

The Cary Memorial Library is a warm and inviting place for children to develop a love of books, reading, and libraries. The Children's Room contains a wide range of materials that are selected for children through grade 6. The library reminds parents that responsibility for a child's use of library materials, regardless of format or content, lies with the parent or guardian, not the library.

While the Library staff strive to create a welcoming and comfortable place for children, it is important to remember that the library is a public building, and may not always be a safe place for unaccompanied children.

To help provide for the well-being of children using the Library, the following policies have been established:

Use of the Children's Room:

Seating in the Children's Room is reserved for children in grades 5 and below and their caregivers.

Unattended Adults in the Children's Room/Children's Programs:

- Adults are permitted in the Children's Room when accompanied by a youth or if the adult is actively using the collection or space in a way deemed appropriate by the staff.
- Unattended adults are not permitted in youth programs except with approval from the Youth Services staff.
- Unaccompanied adults may be asked to use other areas of the library.

Unattended Children Policy:

Parents/caregivers are responsible for the safety and well-being of their children on Library property. Here are the guidelines for leaving your child unattended in the library for short periods of time:

- **Children under the age of 4** must be directly supervised ("within sight") of a responsible caregiver.
    - An active and engaged caregiver of at least 12 years of age must be in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact with the child at all times.
    - Caregivers must attend programs with their children.
    - Non-custodial caregivers should have emergency contact information for parents/guardians.

- **Children between the ages of 4 and 8** must be closely supervised (within the same room or area of the library) by a responsible caregiver.
    - An active and engaged caregiver of at least 12 years of age must be in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact with the child at all times.
    - Caregivers must remain in the building when their children are attending programs.
    - Non-custodial caregivers should have emergency contact information for parents/guardians.
- **Children age 9 or older** may use the library unattended.
    - Children must be mature enough to follow the library's Rules of Behavior Policy. Consequences for violating this policy may include being asked to leave the library. If a child is unable to leave the library without an adult, they should not be left unattended in the library.
    - Unattended children must have an emergency phone number with them when using the library unattended. This is of particular concern for an emergency closure of the library.

Unattended children should be picked up at least 5 minutes prior to the Library's closure. At closing, if a child under the age of 12 remains, two library staff will wait with the child outside the Library. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes of the Library's closing, the Lexington Police will be contacted to take custody of the child.

Library staff are not allowed to transport any child to any location.

Your Child's Library Card

Per state law, a child's library card is granted full privacy rights. Parents who choose to allow their child to obtain their own library card should be aware of the limitations of what library staff are allowed to reveal to them about the child's card. For more information, please review our handout for parents "Your Child's Library Card"

Your child's library card may be used to access the library's public internet computers or to check out laptop computers for use in the building. Please be aware that the library does not filter internet access on public computers.

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